United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council, in Presidential statement, expresses satisfaction at developments in Cambodia since May elections, citing proclamation of Constitution and creation of new Government; hails successful completion of UNTAC mandate.

- Cyprus, Bulgaria, Liechtenstein, Jordan, Algeria, Kazakhstan and Panama among speakers in General Assembly's general debate today.

- Saint Kitts and Nevis, Uruguay, Qatar, Togo, Maldives and Ethiopia among speakers in general debate on Monday.

- Secretary-General, in review of functioning of United Nations, says pace of renewal must accelerate, with emphasis on peacemaking and peace-keeping operations; stresses need for better coordination, budgetary planning, management control and auditing.

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The Security Council today expressed satisfaction at the auspicious developments that had taken place in Cambodia since elections were held there last May, particularly the proclamation last month of the Cambodian Constitution and the creation of a new Government. In a statement read out by its President, Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg (Brazil), the Council congratulated King Norodom Sihanouk on his accession to the throne and paid tribute to his continuing role in the quest for national reconcilition and a better future for all Cambodians. The Council also thanked Prince Norodom Ranariddh, First Prime Minister of Cambodia, and Hun Sen, Second Prime Minister, for their presence at its meeting.

The Council reiterated its recognition of the remarkable work of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in successfully completing its mandate, under the leadership of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Yasushi Akashi. The Council stressed the importance of the continued support of the international community to the consolidation of peace and democracy and the promotion of development in Cambodia.

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The Council said it would continue to study the situation in Cambodia and would consider what action it should take, taking into account the letter dated 26 September addressed to the Secretary-General by Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Mr. Hun Sen, and the Secretary-General's further report on the implementation of Council resolution 745 (1992).

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Glafcos Clerides, President of Cyprus, said in an address to the General Assembly today that his country had consistently made the principles of the United Nations Charter central to its foreign policy. Members had a common responsibility to strengthen the Organization to meet current challenges and to improve the prospects for peace, prosperity and democracy. Those expectations could only be met through the implementation of United Nations resolutions and mandatory provisions of the Charter. Failure to uphold international law and human rights, or upholding them in one situation and ignoring violations in another, must no longer be acceptable.

The promotion of human rights was inseparable from democratization, the President continued. He said he was especially sensitive on that subject as a large component of the Cyprus problem was the massive violation of the human rights of persons evicted from their homes by the "Turkish forces of occupation". Turkey had committed flagrant violations of human rights despite General Assembly and Security Council resolutions calling on all Member States to respect the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic, to avoid actions which could change the population's demographic composition, and to withdraw all foreign forces and allow for the safe return of refugees. If a lasting solution to the problem was to be found, and a federally united state established, concerted action would be required by the international community, he stated.

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Zhelyu Zhelev, President of Bulgaria, told the General Assembly today that democratic changes in Eastern Europe had added an element of dynamism to the building of European unity. Democracy in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union was of great importance in international life, and Bulgaria fully supported the reform-minded and democratic forces in the Russian Federation. Recent events in Moscow showed how difficult the transition to democracy could be and the risks that were entailed. He urged the United Nations to provide moral, political and financial support to nations in transition.

The United Nations must take energetic steps to end the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to prevent other conflicts from flaring up in the former Yugoslavia, the President said. Bulgaria supported the constructive engagement of the United States, notably the preventive stationing of troops under the United Nations flag in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Bulgaria had suffered severe economic losses by implementing sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Macedonia), and those losses had thwarted economic reform and jeopardized the democratic process and social peace. He stressed the need for a mechanism to compensate Member States who

had suffered because of their strict implementation of Security Council sanctions, and proposed such measures as stand-by agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), help with debt servicing, and the provision of financing for infrastructure projects.

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Prince Hans-Adam II, Head of State of Liechtenstein, said in the general debate this morning that while tensions within and between communities might be an inevitable part of the human condition, it was vitally important that ways be found to relieve them peacefully, without bloodshed. The principle of self-determination, he stated, offered a basis for some solutions. Its value had been demonstrated in the context of decolonization. Applied to communities within States, allowing for different levels of autonomy according to circumstances, it could defuse many of the tensions which were such a potent source of conflict. He suggested that eventually those principles could be elaborated in a convention, for general application.

A significant degree of interest had been shown in the concept, he said. Liechtenstein welcomed the inclusion in the agenda of the current General Assembly session of an item entitled "Effective realization of the right of self-determination through autonomy". Great difficulties would arise in its consideration, he said, but the danger and suffering caused by tensions within communities made it essential that the international community open up new thinking on the subject, to find effective means to promote the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

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Crown Prince El-Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan, addressing the General Assembly this afternoon, said that there was considerable alarm in the Muslim world at suggestions that Islam might replace Communism as a global threat, depicting it as a monolithic creed of violence, intolerance and oppression. Extremism did exist in the Muslim world, as it did amongst all groups, he said, but extremism was caused by disparities and despair. The real enemy, he stressed, were the politics and economics of exclusivity, "a new world of each for himself". The strongest defence against that would be a global business ethic based on mutual inter-dependence, that required striving for unity while never seeking to eradicate or compromise diversity.

Turning to the peace process with Israel, he said that some issues could not be addressed by any two parties to the exclusion of others. The status of Jerusalem had to determined in such a way as to guarantee the legitimate rights the three monotheistic faiths shared in the city. The question of regional security, water, and -- above all - the refugees, had to resolved with direct reference to the neighbouring States. Jordan had shouldered an enormous human load as a result of the conflict, providing shelter and succour to three waves of involuntary migrants, and it sought an equitable, sustainable international approach to the treatment of its demographic burden.

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Mohamed Salah Dembri, the Foreign Minister of Algeria, today called on the General Assembly to give decisive impetus in this session to the preparation of an international convention for the prevention and repression of terrorism. The international community, he said, must mobilize its energy to overcome "this modern form of barbarity" in all its manifestations. With respect to international terrorism, he said that Algeria would not tolerate any intereference from outside with its internal affairs. While respecting all forms of human rights, the country was currently in a situation which obliged the State to give priority to protecting the fundamental right to life and security of person. In that context, the restoration of public order and the struggle against terrorism were part of its determination to guarantee a lasting democracy based on the rule of law, on alternation and on the principles of a republic.

As part of the future of the Arab world, Algeria fervently hoped that the elimination of the consequences of the Gulf war would open the way to inter-Arab reconciliation, he said. Iraq had undertaken to meet fully all the obligations stemming from Security Council resolutions and international law had established a geographic framework for peaceful neighbourliness between Iraq and Kuwait. He expressed the hope that those developments would allow the resolution of pending humanitarian questions, so that the collective consciousness of the Arab people could be spared the horrors of war.

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Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister, Touleutai Suleimenov, told the General Assembly today that his country proposed the creation of a system of collective security in Asia within the framework of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). To that end, Kazakhstan had hosted two rounds of expert-level meetings in Almaty which had produced promising results. At present, 25 Asian States were involved in the CICA process. He invited other States interested in contributing to confidence-building measures in Asia to join the effort.

The Minister said the Defence Coalition Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States had reduced the scale of military confrontation in the Tajik conflict, and should be recognized as the United Nations peacemaking force in the region. He went on to say that Asian States should coordinate their efforts with regard to environmental issues. The critical situation in the region of the Aral sea had been discussed at international conferences and meetings, resulting in important documents defining short-term and strategic solutions to the problems. Kazakhstan wholeheartedly supported a comprehensive nuclear test ban, having suffered considerable damage as a result of tests at the now-closed Semipalatinsk Testing Ground. Kazakhstan also attached great importance to cooperation with the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, he said, adding that membership in the United Nations had allowed the country to become actively involved in international life.

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Carlos Arosemena, Panama's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, told the General Assembly today that drug addiction had become the main scourge of humanity. Panama and all other States had a duty to repress drug trafficking and resulting money laundering activities. Tackling drug-related crimes required effective international cooperation, he said. To that end, Panama had signed the Treaty for Mutual Assistance in Criminal Affairs with the United States in 1991, and the Agreement for Mutual Legal Cooperation on Drug Trafficking with the United Kingdom this year.

In the year 2000, Mr. Arosemena continued, Panama would host the Ibero-American Chiefs of State Summit. It would also attain its most important legal and political objective: the recovery of its right over the Panama Canal and the freeing of its territory from the jurisdictional limitations imposed by the now-defunct Hay-Bunau Varilla Treaty. The present Panama Canal Treaty would expire on 31 December 1993 and Panama would thereafter manage, operate and maintain the Canal. It would also be legally bound to manage the Canal efficiently. In order to handle projected traffic, a high-level lock system would have to be build in the next century. Panama would need the cooperation of the international community for such a project, he said, given the Canal's importance to international trade.

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Kennedy Simmonds, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis, said in the general debate yesterday that membership in the United Nations was neither a deterrent to reunification, as illustrated in the case of Germany, nor to fragmentation, as in the case of the Soviet Union. The Organization operated most effectively by a process of inclusion, rather than exclusion. He called on the United Nations "to begin the process which would eventually lead to the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan into the Organization", saying that it had had proven itself to be a country dedicated to the principles of the United Nations Charter.

He emphasized the vulnerability of the Caribbean's ecosystem and the need for constant vigilance with respect to its protection and preservation. He strongly condemned the transboundary movement of toxic waste and hazardous and nuclear materials through the Caribbean Basin, and called on the industrialized countries to refrain from exporting their waste to or through the region. He appealed to the industrialized countries and multilateral agencies to be more rational and sensitive to the developmental needs of the developing world, especially those of island communities, in their approach to dealing with the environment.

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Sergio Abreu, Uruguay's Foreign Minister, said in the General Assembly yesterday that his country was concerned about the obstacles blocking the conclusion the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). After seven long years of negotiations, certain trends continued to obstruct the process of multilateralization. Uruguay once again rejected the protectionist policies applied by some highly industrialized countries, he

said, stressing that these were incompatible with the rules of GATT and with the stand-still commitments.

Regarding peace-keeping, he said Uruguay had offered to host regional training centres for the peace-keeping forces. However, he was concerned that those operations would be discontinued due to the delays in payment of Members' contributions, and that only countries with vast financial resources could participate in peace-keeping operations. He believed that a policy of collective security must be supplemented by a policy of disarmament and a ban on nuclear weapons by all nations. He noted that Argentina, Brazil and Chile had implemented regional agreements to ensure peaceful use of nuclear energy and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

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Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, told the General Assembly yesterday that arms limitation in the Middle East should be given priority in order to maintain peace and stability in the region. Funds released as a result could be channelled into economic and social development, on the condition that all the States of the region would benefit. Qatar also supported all initiatives aimed at making the Middle East a region free of nuclear weapons.

Addressing the problem of indebtedness was the first essential step towards strengthening the economies of developing countries, he continued. Rich creditor States should, once and for all, solve that problem in favour of developing countries, particularly in Africa. He said the environment had become a high priority and an integral part of national interests and security. However, it was important to identify sources of pollution and the relationship between the environment and economic development. The imposition of an energy tax on exporting countries was unjust considering the pollution caused by sources such as coal, whose negative environmental effects exceeded those of oil.

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Ouattara Fambare Natchaba, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Togo, told the General Assembly yesterday that Togo's path to democratization had been a very painful one. Violence had ravaged the entire country and had led to displacements of population. But following the elections held on 25 August of this year, it was hoped that the country would recover its national health. He expressed appreciation for the role played by friendly countries in helping resolve the crisis situation in Togo.

In an overview of developments in Africa, he said he hoped that the lifting of sanctions against South Africa would promote the progress being made in dismantling the apartheid system. He welcomed the prospect of a genuine settlement of the conflicts in Liberia and Rwanda, and the efforts of the Secretary-General to implement the United Nations settlement plan for Western Sahara. He called for the cancellation or substantial reduction of the debt carried by Africa and said that after the "lost decade" of the 1980s,

the 1990 should witness an increase in development aid, particularly in view of the transition to democracy in many developing countries.

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Fathulla Jameel, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Maldives, said in the general debate yesterday that the international community needed to examine why it had failed to stop the carnage taking place in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He also expressed concern about the continued violations of human rights taking place in Angola and Somalia. The United Nations was learning a very expensive lesson, in terms of human life and financial resources, in providing humanitarian assistance and in seeking to protect the people of those countries.

North-South dialogue should be reactivated on a new basis, he said, focusing on common interests, benefits and shared responsibilities. Similarly, South-South cooperation must be intensified, with the pooling of resources and concrete development efforts in the framework of collective self-reliance and support for open trading systems. He went on to stress his Government's belief that sustainable development was the only way to guarantee continued life on earth and he called on all States to ratify the Climate Convention and the Bio-diversity Convention. As a small island State, he said, his country regarded the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States as a very important step towards solving the unique problems faced in their developmental efforts.

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Seyoum Mesfin, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the transitional Government of Ethiopia, said in the general debate yesterday that in a brief period of two years, Ethiopia had emerged from a state of desperation to recovery. The country now looked to the future with considerable confidence. He welcomed Eritrea as a Member of the United Nations and said that the two countries had taken steps to forge a new era of close relationship and cooperation. The vision of the Ethiopian and Eritrean leadership and peoples was for economic, social and cultural integration, leading to political integration on a new plane, and expansion of the process to include the countries of the subregion.

He went on to say that the problem of refugees and persons displaced by a host of calamities continued to haunt the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia continued to face immense difficulties, whose solutions were beyond the scope of its own meagre resources. He said the principles for the delivery of humanitarian assistance agreed to at the Horn of Africa Conference in Addis Ababa last year should be observed, to ensure that relief assistance reached the needy. He also appealed to all Member States to fully support efforts to elaborate an international convention to combat desertification.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has said that the pace of renewal of the United Nations must accelerate and that high priority will continue to be given to the increased demands for peacemaking, peace-keeping and related operations. In a review of the administrative and financial functioning of the Organization dated 29 September, he stressed the need for greater coordination within an integrated structure, improved budgetary planning, management control and auditing. Ensuring the safety and security of staff in the field was a major related challenge.

The Secretary-General noted that the range of responsibilities facing the United Nations extended to almost every area of human activity, and that agreement was emerging among the membership on its role and objectives. Far-reaching administrative reforms had already been implemented to make the Organization more efficient and effective.

With respect to preventive diplomacy, the Secretary-General said a network of early warning systems was being developed to respond to environmental threats, natural disasters, mass population movements, the threat of famine and other risks. However, a more systematic cooperative effort was needed to use the available information. Restructuring had encompassed all economic and social sectors in the development field. The measures taken were rooted in a basic concept of the functions best performed at Headquarters and those that should be carried out at the regional and field levels. He stressed the need to create new "linkages and synergies" between agencies and in the field and between policy-making and operational activities. In the next year, the reform process would be carried out in several duty stations, and decentralization would mean a more effective distribution of responsibilities and better coordination within the system.

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